



# **STAHLMAN**

## **BEEKEEPING NOTES**

Published by Dana Stahlman Raleigh, North Carolina Email:  
[stahlmanapiaries@aol.com](mailto:stahlmanapiaries@aol.com)

Published free as a public service to anyone interested in honeybees. Email me to be added to my mailing list. **Published 9-7-24**

**2024 Vol 6 issue  
# 34**

**These bee notes will be published twice a month until the 2025 bee season begins. Please note this change in publication dates.**

I have reduced my hive numbers down to two strong hives. Many beekeepers and I was included -- are always making splits and increasing hive numbers. I started this year with three hives and increased hive numbers to 9. It is my practice to help new beekeepers replace hives or provide frames and brood to help a struggling hive.

This year proved to be an awakening of sorts. I had too many hives to manage on these hot summer days. Rather than try to care for them, I decided to downsize. Several reasons for doing this just made good common sense.

- I was having trouble lifting supers full of honey. Actually not that many but enough to make me realize that it was getting harder and harder to lift heavy items.
- The number of beekeepers living near me made this area unsuitable for 9 hives of bees in my backyard. This of course was over stocking the area for anyone keeping bees.
- Robbing was a real issue for my bees. I put entrance robbing screens on all hives and I had to keep them in place all summer. I am sure my neighboring beekeepers faced robbing from my bees.
- I have good relationships with my neighbors but 9 hives started stretching that welcome a bit. I provide my neighbors with honey but we have had some problems with people (young people) being stung at the community swimming pool and one neighbor is concerned with bees flying around her shrubs and flowers. I might add that I did move my bees off property last year because a neighbor getting his gutters cleaned had a problem with my bees. Actually they could have been neighboring honey bees from other hives in the area. The company hired to clean the gutters arrived, put up their ladders, and found bees getting water from the gutters they were to clean. They stopped working and refused to clean the gutters until the bees were gone. Understandable!

My neighbor is a nice family man and has been very supportive of the bees. A bee sting or two were tolerated. I offered to move the hives that evening to a location on a farm about 30 miles away. Problem solved. After the gutters were cleaned and I brought the bees back home.

**I believe in a good neighbor policy.**

- **I give honey to all the neighbors that live near my property. They let me know if a swarm comes from my hives and welcome me to come and get them.**
- **I have shared with them information about the need for bees and the stress factors bees face.**
- **I make darn sure I have gentle stock. Any aggressive hive that I own faces removal to the farm and most likely the queen will be killed.**
- **I try to manage the varroa mite situation so that my neighboring beekeepers can manage their own mite problems.**

**One big change I have made this year is to move bees from deep supers to medium supers. I still keep the 10 frame structure which reduces the weight problem but allows more room for the bees to expand the brood nest.**

**I have a very good friend who has taken on the job of managing all my former hives of bees. Payment for the bees has been a good deal for both of us. I am paid in honey from the bees each year. I get any replacement bees in the spring if I need them. And I can play with them anytime I want. The good thing is I am not responsible for caring for them. My wife always commented to me about what would she do with all the bee stuff when I can no longer take care of them. No worry, it is taken care of.**

**Let me share a sad story. Beekeepers age and at some point find themselves with a tough decision to sell their bees. I am not sure what you would do, but the beekeeper I am sharing this story about had health issues. He had no offers by any buyers because he was asking too much for his bees and equipment. The bees -- over 300 colonies -- sat for three years without any care. His children all were college graduates -- he was a barber who used money earned from the bees to help pay for his kids college educations. They were not interested in keeping bees.**

**Wax moth got into his bees and destroyed just about everything he had worked years building up. Of course, the mites started the job and the wax moth took over the job of making equipment value-less.**

**After his passing, the wife was left with two buildings full of bee equipment, and a vague idea where the bee yards were located. His extracting equipment went to the junk yard -- it was old galvanized metal that no one wanted and the bee hives and equipment were all burned. I was told that not one hive survived. I have seen old abandoned bee yards and usually little is left to recover.**

**Check out these pictures : I just want to share with you that there are abandoned bees to be found somewhere. I found two abandoned yards in Madison, County, Ohio in 2013. I just happened to be talking to a farmer who indicated he knew where some hives had been kept many years ago and to his knowledge they were still there abandoned. The owners of the two properties allowed me to investigate and if I wanted, take what might remain.**





The hives were in various stages of being overgrown with brambles and wild raspberry bushes.

Note: After the overgrowth was removed, I was able to back a trailer into the old bee yard and salvage what was still usable including a hive you see standing upright and to the right of the tree trunk.



The farmer that owned these woods indicated that many years ago a beekeeper had left the bees. Hunters often used them for target practice.

The farmer indicated that at least 10 years or more had passed since anyone had

managed them.



This one hive was alive. I counted 11 bottom boards frozen in the ground and a number of rotted boxes and even some old bee packages scattered over the site. From the looks of it, paint on hives had not held up well. To this day, I am not sure who owned these bees and when they were abandoned.

I did write three articles for *the Walter T. Kelly newsletter*. See the attachment for the first of three articles published in 2013. The following two articles were about how the bees were removed from the old equipment and transferred to new equipment. **Article I of the series is attached to this message.**